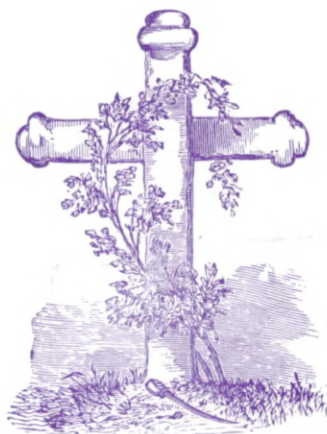


C. H. S.

# BANDWAGON

1956, Vol. 5—AUGUST

25c



## *In Memoriam*

CHARLES J. DEAN

FRANK KINDLER

GLEN TRACY

— The Circusiana Magazine —

## CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1939

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E. F. Titus, Casilla 1515, Valparaiso, Chili,  
S. America.

25c a single copy

\$1.50 a year in U. S. A.

Advertising rates—

\$5.00 Full Page

\$3.50 Half Page

\$2.00 Quarter Page

Permission to copy articles in this magazine  
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lisher.

## The Editor Says

Has your blood pressure gone up? Has your head ached? Have you talked yourself hoarse? So, it is with us. "The tented circus is a thing of the past—it is no more." Words cannot express what I think of this statement.

From April 21st to May 30th of this year I spent ten days on circus lots. This was with four different shows, none of them have folded, nor do I see any indication of them doing so.

We certainly appreciate all the papers, clippings, etc., that we have received from our members regarding "The Big One." Each article is read and appreciated. Already, though, the tone is changing, I feel. The Show will go out again but with many changes.

Let's keep all the shows on the road. It's squarely up to us to keep on talking.

### NEW MEMBERS

Charles Gorsuch, No. 603  
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\*New since Roster was published.

## Our President Stars Again

Reprinted from Wichita Beacon, June 8, 1956

By JOHN WATSON

Altho she retired from circus life in 1938, Mrs. Bette Leonard, 440 N. Dodge, still finds a lot of sawdust from the "big top" rings in her blood and she can't stay away from circus lots and performers even tho the show may be playing as far as 100 miles from Wichita.

She still maintains contact with hundreds of her old circus friends thruout the United States and the fact that she has been president of the Circus Historical Society, an international organization, for the last ten years, is active in the work of the Circus Fans of America; and also holds membership in other circus groups, including several foreign organizations, keeps alive her deep affection for the circus.

Indicative of the wide acquaintance the Wichita woman has in the circus world is the fact that she receives between 700 and 800 Christmas cards each year from her "big top" friends.

"I was literally shoved into a life in the circus—a life I followed for more than 25 years," Mrs. Leonard commented last week.

### Met Show People on Farm

As a teen-ager she lived with her grandparents in Pennsylvania. They operated a pony farm and as a result she met a lot of show people who came to the farm to purchase ponies. She could ride well and one day a circus owner urged her to join his outfit. Her grandparents and her mother didn't like the idea but Bette—who then was known as Bessie—finally persuaded them that a circus career was the thing for her.

That was in 1917. Her first stint as a circus performer was a posing act with white horses and dogs.

"It was a beautiful thing," Mrs. Leonard recalled, "but it took a lot of hard work learning to pose correctly and to handle the horses and dogs."

Later she became an aerialist, was a member of a flying act, worked elephants and horses and had a dog act.

She laughed when she reminisced on her work as an aerialist. Principally a member of a flying trapeze act, she occasionally filled in during a number called an "aerial ballet" on programs. In such a number some 20 or 25 girls on trapezes line the top of the tent around the rings.

"We call it the 'chambermaids' frolic' in the circus world," Mrs. Leonard said.

### Performers Did Everything

She added that during her years with circuses a performer did everything. Each one appeared a number of times in different capacities during the show—not just once or twice as is the custom today.

Mrs. Leonard traveled with a number of well-known circuses during her career, including Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Gentry Brothers, Walter L. Main, Christy Brothers, Seils-Sterling and Ring-



ling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey. She was with the latter show, the "big one," for two years.

She retired from circus life in 1938 after she was badly burned from her ankles to her hips in an auto accident. She was hospitalized for long months after the accident. However, she played fairs several years later.

The Wichita woman loved her years with the circus. The excitement and adventure, as well as the "something new and different every day" angle appealed to her. She thinks circus people are among the finest in the world. She liked them when she was on the road—and she still likes them.

### **Circuses Different Now**

"It's different now than it used to be, however," she sighed. "There once was a friendliness and neighborliness on the circus lot that doesn't exist now. I think that is because most of the shows are motorized now. There is only one circus—the Ringling show—which travels by rail now. The rest of them use cars, trucks and trailers. The performers live in trailers and consequently don't mingle with the other performers like they used to. I know of one circus which has done away with its cook shack because all the employees eat their meals in their own trailer homes."

Mrs. Leonard keeps in touch constantly with circus folks—from performers who get top billing on the programs to press agents, advance men and even some of the roustabouts who have been with shows for years.

### **Knew Emmett Kelly**

Among her close friends are Emmett Kelly, Lou Jacobs and Freddie Freeman, famous clowns; Merle Evans, the Kansas-born musician who led the Ringling band for more than 30 years; the Concellos, famous aerialists; and the Rudynoffs and Hannefords, noted for their riding acts.

She recently received an announcement of the marriage of Rudy Rudynoff and Beverly Lane. They were married June 2 in Wisconsin. Both appeared here at the Police Circus this spring.

Over the years, Mrs. Leonard has built up an imposing collection of circus life—old programs, posters, photographs, passes, newspaper clippings and other souvenirs.

### **Keeps Scrapbook**

She doesn't know how many circus pictures she has. She started counting them one day but abandoned the task after she reached the 7,000-mark. There are pictures of the early day, colorful parades with plumed horses and ornate wagons; pictures of performers and views of tents and animals.

Mrs. Leonard has about 60 albums filled with newspaper clippings and pictures, huge boxes filled with items that she hasn't had time to file or place in an album and more than 100 programs of foreign circuses sent to her by friends who have joined shows abroad.

Altho she had retired when the disastrous fire struck the Ringling show in Hartford, Conn., on July 6, 1944, Mrs. Leonard has many newspaper clippings describing the holocaust. The fire brought death to 168 and injured 487.

One of her friends, Joe Siegrist, an aerialist who made his home in Wichita several years ago and now lives in Kansas City, recovered the body of a little girl who never was identified.

### Performers Care for Grave

Circus people obtained a lot in a cemetery in Hortford for burial of the child. These same circus people keep up the lot to this day and see that flowers always are on the grave.

Among the circus souvenirs owned by Mrs. Leonard is a program for the Adam Forepaugh show, one of the nation's early-day circuses. The program, for the 1891 season, is printed on pink satin. Mrs. Leonard explained that only seven of these satin programs are in existence and she has refused offers of \$100 for the souvenir.

In those days, programs were printed on white satin for such people as governors and senators who might attend a performance. The programs printed on pink satin were for lesser dignitaries like mayors of cities where a circus played. (Continued in next issue).

## BANDWAGON Copies Available

July, 1951  
August, 1951  
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January, 1952  
February, 1952  
March, 1952  
April-May, 1952  
August, 1952  
September, 1952  
Christmas, 1952

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March 17, 1955  
April, 1955  
June, 1955  
September-October, 1955  
Christmas, 1955

January-February, 1956  
March-April, 1956  
May-June, 1956  
July, 1956

25c each to cover printing and mailing.  
Special rates 5 for \$1.00

PUBLISHED AT RICHMOND, INDIANA  
P. O. BOX 235

### DIRECTORS!!!!

The compilers of the Roster wish to apologize to all the directors, both past and present and future. Due to the intricacies of the mail from Wichita, Kansas to Richmond, Indiana, the Directors as they appear in the Roster and in this issue of the Bandwagon are not correct. We hope that at the Convention that this matter can be straightened out and that all will be advised just who is who.

# With The Greatest Show On Earth

(OLEANDER'S FIFTH LETTER)

By John G. Quinius

Written in 1900 by John G. Quinius. Furnished the Band Wagon by his son Herman M. Quinius, CFA of Bette Leonard Tent, Wichita, Kansas. Please note these stories were written and published for childrens entertainment over 55 years ago.

At last we have reached Chicago, the windy city, and the largest city in the United States. The city, which is divided by the Chicago River into three great divisions, called the North Side, South Side; and West Side, was built around the original site of old Fort Dearborn. It has become a city of splendid buildings and business houses of mammoth proportions. A great portion of the city has been built upon artificial ground, the original levels being found much too low. More railroads run into Chicago than enter any other city in the world, and these transportation facilities, as well as its geographical location, make it the greatest market in the world for live stock and grain and lumber. The city also boasts of some beautiful parks, and of the great University of Chicago.

I want to write you about some of the cities in which we have been since I wrote you last. I will have to cut out all of the smaller places for want of time and space, and be content to describe only the larger cities. From Philadelphia we went direct to Pittsburg, the smoky city, and the most important city in the United States for the handling of iron and steel. The immense mills turn out vast quantities of steel rails and armor plate, and the glass works make and ship much plate and window glass. Pittsburg is also the home of the Western University of Pennsylvania.

While at Washington, D.C., the capitol of our nation, I saw our President and two of his children. In this, perhaps the most interesting city of the United States, there are so many things to see that I dare not begin to describe them. I'll just mention three of the best, not including the Government building. Here we find located the Catholic University of America, the Howard University for Colored People, the Columbia Institution for Deaf and Dumb. Each institution is doing a great work. In Cincinnati I noticed the great iron suspension bridges spanning the Ohio River, and heard also that here was the place where the celebrated Rookwood Pottery is made. I noticed also the city was surrounded on all but the river side by high hills. Our next stop was at St. Louis, the city from which much of the merchandise used by the people of the southern towns and cities is shipped. Two large bridges span the Mississippi River at this point. St. Louis and Washington Universities are also located here. From St. Louis we journeyed by stages to Columbus, spending one day there. Our parade passed the capitol square and the old capitol building, with its "cheese box" dome, so called because from a distance it looks just like a great round cheese. A little farther down the street we saw Starling Medical College, noted for its architectural beauty as well as for the many prominent physicians who have been sent out from here. Just two squares from the college is

the Carnegie library building, in one room of which is shown one of the finest collections of stuffed and mounted birds to be seen in the country. Four stops between, and then our train rolled into Indianapolis. I hear that this city is one of the finest residence cities in the land. While there I saw the tall and handsome soldiers' and sailors' monument, standing in stately magnificence right in the center of the city. No one who sees it can help but be impressed with its beauty and grandeur. Our next stop was at Crawfordsville, then to LaFayette, the seat of the State Agricultural College and Purdue University. From here to Muncie, where natural gas is almost as free and plentiful as air, then to Peru and Logansport and to Fort Wayne, the city built upon the site of the old fort of Anthony Wayne, noted in border and Indian warfare.

At Richmond, the great Quaker town, we encountered a great rain and wind storm, which blew down one of our tents, spoiled an afternoon's performance, and drenched and wet to the skin all the people and horses traveling with us. In addition to this the rain softened up the ground to such an extent that the elephants had to be used to help push and pull the big wagons out of the mud, in order that all might be loaded onto the cars in time to make the run to South Bend for the next performance. Ill luck, however, seemed to pursue us, for just before the first section of our four-section train reached the outskirts of the city, the engine and two cars left the tracks and tumbled down an embankment. Again the elephants came to the rescue and helped the men to clear the road and wreck, and although all the other sections of the train had to wait for the clearing of the road, we managed to get into the town in time to put up the great tents and give our promised performance. Fortunately, no one was hurt in this wreck.

Last year we were in a terrible railroad accident and wreck, in which many men and animals were killed or injured. Of this I will write you in another letter and try to describe to you the very exciting time we experienced and passed through.

And now I'll just write a few words about Michigan City, the last point we made before reaching Chicago. All the places I've described, beginning with Indianapolis, have been in the great State of Indiana,—the Hoosier State,—the State in which lives and writes the much-liked poet, James Whitcomb Riley, whose rhymes of childhood have been read and recited and enjoyed by tens of thousands of his fellow-men; but to get back to Michigan City, I'll just state that it is situated right on the lake, and about the largest building I saw there was the Indiana State prison. There must be much trade and traffic, for everybody seemed to be in a hurry and very busy. The whole town, however, must have taken "a day off," judging from the crowds that came to see us.

Well! I declare, I see it's getting late and I'll hardly have time to write you about the performing bears and about the wonderful things our drove of elephants have been taught to do. I'll surely do this in my next letter. I'm sorry I cannot do so in this. If, however, you will remember most of what I've written about the cities mentioned, I'll feel that my letter has not been sent you in vain.



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# The Circus In Indiana

(Compiled by F. C. Fisher, Chalmer Condon and George L. Chindahl)

Editor's Note: This is a very timely compilation in view of the fact that our 1956 Convention is in Peru, Indiana.

## CIRCUS QUARTERS

### AMBIA

Boughton

### ANDERSON

Ketrow

### BLOOMINGTON

Gentry

### BRAZIL

Admire

### CICERO

John A. Harris

### CONNERSVILLE

Van Amburgh  
Bartine

### DENVER

Alderfer

### EVANSVILLE

Norris & Rowe

### FORT WAYNE

Stewart

### FRANKFORT

Rippel Bros.  
Ruffner Bros.

### INDIANAPOLIS

B. L. Wallace

### INGALLS

Eakins

### KOKOMO

Sipe, Dolman & Blake  
Sipe's Educated Animal and  
Lilliputian Show

### LA CROSSE

Barlow

### MUNCIE

Hall & Long

### NEY ALBANY

Spalding & Rogers' Floating Palace  
tied up here and burned, 1865.

### PERU

Wallace & Co.  
Great Wallace  
Cook & Whitby  
Hagenbeck-Wallace  
Robinson Famous  
John Robinson  
Sells-Floto  
Cole Bros.  
Jacobs Bros.

### ROCHESTER

Cole Bros.  
Robbins Bros.

### SOUTH MILFORD

Barlow

### SULLIVAN

Bays Bros.

### TERRE HAUTE

Wixom

### WASHINGTON

Coup-Shelby

### WEST BADEN

Hagenbeck-Wallace  
Howe's Great London  
John Robinson

## SUPPLIERS

### EVANSVILLE

George Kratz, steam calliope manufacturer.

### PERU

Sullivan & Eagle, circus wagon builders.  
Paul Kelly, menagerie animals.

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